

PAUL AND VIRGINIA:

OR,

THE RUNAWAY SLAVE.

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS.

DRAMATIZED FROM THE STORY OF J. B. H. DE SAINT PIERRE,

BY J. L. RINGWALT.

PHILADELPHIA:

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by J. I.
RINGWALT, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern
District of Pennsylvania.

TO THEATRICAL MANAGERS.

The accompanying dramatization of the well known story of "Paul and Virginia" is presented to the notice of theatrical managers in the belief that it is especially fitted to attract public attention at the present moment. As in the original story, a very prominent position is given to the negroes, two principal parts and several minor ones being in their hands—and much of the interest of the plot turns upon the gratitude of a fugitive slave to the hero and heroine of the play. The simplicity of language and sentiment, which is the charm of the original, has been carefully preserved, while the tableaux ending each act, and particularly the last, will be found to afford opportunity for considerable scenic effects.

Managers who wish to obtain permission to place it upon the stage will please address

J. L. RINGWALT,

111 South 4th Street, Philadelphia.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

MADAME DE LA TOUR—a lady of Normandy.

MARGUERITE—a peasant woman of Brittany.

VIRGINIA—Daughter of Mad. de la Tour.

PAUL—son of Marguerite.

M. DE LA BOURDONNAIS—Governor General of the
Island.

MONSIEUR DORVAL—a French planter.

FATHER PIERRE—a Priest.

OFFICER OF THE PORT.

ZABI—a fugitive slave.

DOMINGO—a Negro of Angola.

FRENCH SOLDIERS.

FRENCH SAILORS.

NEGROES.

TIME OF THE PLAY, A.D. 1738.

PAUL AND VIRGINIA.

ACT I.

THE SCENE represents a wild part of the Isle of France ; a narrow river, with rocks appearing above the water. These must be near enough to each other to serve as stepping stones. At the end of the overture is heard the sound of rain, and as the curtain rises, PAUL and VIRGINIA appear huddling together, with the skirt of VIRGINIA'S dress thrown over their heads.

Paul. Lean on me ! Do not be afraid !

Virginia. Oh ! my dear brother !

Paul. (*Drawing his head from under her skirt.*) Bah ! The storm is over, it does not rain any more.

Virginia. (*Pettishly.*) Nothing but storms ! It is always raining !

Paul. Fie ! This is the rainy season—but this is the last of it.

Virginia. Do you really think so ?

Paul. (*Coming forward.*) Wait while I look. You know I am weatherwise. Besides, there is the rainbow, and the priest told us when we saw that we had no more to fear.

Virginia. Do you know the road home ? • We were chatting all the way, not looking where we were going,

and now I am afraid we are far down the valley. How hungry I am too, and suppose the night should overtake us before we reach home!

Paul. Night! The sun is over our heads, the trees hardly throw any shadow even at their roots. When the shadows lengthen it will be soon enough to turn back. Here is something to eat, not much indeed, but we are not so far from home as you think. (*He takes a small basket from his arm and places it on the ground.*) Now, wait a moment while I find out our whereabouts (*gazes towards the sky slowly,*) yes—yes—when we started the clouds were sailing that way, when we want to go back we will only have to follow them—that is all!

Virginia. But our mothers will be so uneasy! They are so good to us, we ought not to distress them in any way. How good they are! I love yours as I do my own.

Paul. And I yours! Does not your mother call me her son, and shall I not be so, some day. And when that time comes, my sister will not run away from me because I want a kiss—one kiss—such a little thing. (*Approaching her.*)

Virginia. (*Covering her face.*) Oh, Paul, don't talk so! Think of our poor mothers banished so far from their native homes. Mother has been so sad since she received that last letter from France. I wish we could read it!

Paul. We would be doing very wrong—it would be stealing her secrets. Indeed I do all in my power to make amends to them. I have arranged the house as they say it is done in France, and I have named one part of our enclosure Brittany and the other Normandy, in memory of—

Virginia. (*Cries suddenly.*) Brother, see, see that negro! He is coming toward us. (*Clinging to him.*) I am afraid!

Paul. (*Placing himself before her.*) Afraid! And with me! (*Reproachfully*)

(*ZABI appears creeping cautiously through the forest.*)

Virginia. Look, look, what is the matter with him!

Paul. I will go and help him.

Virginia. (*Stopping him.*) He may hurt you!

Paul. He will understand that I wish to help him.

(*Calls.*) Come, my good friend!

Zabi. Thanks, many thanks! You are good—you have a good heart, and yet you are white.

Paul. Sit down, rest yourself, you may have confidence in us. I am called Paul, she is Virginia.

Zabi. Ah! I know you well! All the island knows your kind hearts. You live near this.

Paul. (*To VIRGINIA.*) You see we are not far from home. (*To ZABI.*) Tell us what has happened to you, your feet are all bloody.

(*ZABI seats himself on a bank beside VIRGINIA, who wipes his brow with her handkerchief.*)

Virginia. Poor man, tell us your story?

Paul. Open your heart without fear. See how kind my sister is! Perhaps we can assist you.

Zabi. Would you know my sorrow—would you dry the tears of a poor, wretched black man!

Virginia. Yes, yes, pray tell us all—we are friends.

Zabi. My master has always been very harsh to me, and now he has sold me. Sold me to a new master who will take me far from the place where I was born—and my children. Alas! let me die! my children, must I lose you! (*Sobs.*)

Virginia. Such a sad story! No wonder that a father is choked with his tears.

Paul. Unhappy man, come to our cabin, you can help Domingo. Our crop is large this year and I can perhaps buy your children, at least I will try.

Zabi. How kind you are!

Paul. How long is it since you ran away from your master?

Zabi. Two days. Running in the night, creeping in the woods by day—half dead with hunger—chased by hunters. An hour ago I was wishing for death, but there is still something to hope for, since there are whites with good hearts and kind hands.

Virginia. Do not despair, my good man.

Paul. You must be weary and hungry. (*To VIRGINIA.*) Give him some food.

Zabi. Thanks, white man! Thanks, pretty lady! I must have died without your help.

Virginia. (*Taking food from the basket.*) We are happy that we have something left to give.

Paul. You shall go home with us. But no, you cannot walk so far. I can make you a tent of branches to sleep under to-night. Virginia, he must want some water too. (*Paul goes back looking for branches.*)

Virginia. Are you thirsty?

Zabi. Very, kind lady!

Virginia. There is water near. (*Goes off.*)

Zabi. (*Alone.*) They care for me as if I were their father. I—I, weep at their youth—I think of my own children. (*Weeps.*)

Virginia. (*Bringing water in a cup made of leaves.*) Drink, and if there is not enough, I will bring you more.

Zabi. Thanks, it is enough! (*In terror.*) Oh! I am lost—there is my master.

Virginia. Paul! Paul! Where are you! Come! Come quickly! Hide yourself. (*Pushing ZABI behind her.*)

(*Enter DORVAL, attended by negroes.*)

Dorval. There he is! Seize him! Handcuff him!

Paul. (*Hurrying up.*) Oh, sir!

Dorval. (*To BLACKS.*) Do my bidding.

Paul. (*Firmly.*) No! you shall not.

Dorval. (*Menacingly to the BLACKS.*) I order you.

Virginia. (*Clinging to PAUL.*) My brother! Oh, sir!

Paul. (*To VIRGINIA.*) An unfortunate man—overcome with fatigue, (*reproachfully,*) and they would tear him from his children.

Dorval. What right have you to oppose me!

Paul. The right that every man has to defend his fellow man.

Dorval. Do you know that the slave belongs to me. I have sold him to the Governor and I must deliver him up this day.

Virginia. (*Impetuously.*) The Governor! The man who was so harsh to my mother! how she wept when she returned from visiting him. Ah! my poor black, I am sorry for you.

Dorval. (*Angrily.*) The Governor! I see you do not know him! But I am not here to defend him. I must see to my own interests. This negro is a runaway and he shall be treated as he deserves. Seize him!

Paul. Be merciful.

Dorval. Stand out of the way, young man!

Paul. (*With sudden resolution.*) It was our fault! He intended to return to you; it was we—Paul and Virginia—we detained him.

Dorval. (*Aside.*) Paul, Virginia! The whole island rings with their praises.

Virginia. (*Aside to PAUL.*) We detained him! Oh Paul—a falsehood—you said we.

Paul. (*Aside to VIRGINIA.*) Yes, but I must save him.

Zabi. (*Kneeling to DORVAL.*) Pardon me master, pardon poor Zabi. If you have sold me with my children, I will obey—but alone! Without them, Zabi's heart would break.

Dorval. (*Sternly.*) Peace, peace, I say. (*Looking at VIRGINIA.*) She is indeed very charming.

Virginia. (*Appealingly to DORVAL.*) You see the poor man weeps, he is very sorry. Will you not listen to our prayers. (*Suddenly kneels.*) Forgive him, so that when we return to our mothers, we may have a good reason, a happy adventure to excuse our absence. (*Coaxingly.*)

Dorval. You are indeed eloquent, with an eloquence all your own. Rise! I pardon him.

Zabi. Thanks, thanks, good master.

Dorval. Thank rather the lady, her prayers have softened me. Zabi, return immediately. As to your children, do not fear but that you shall see them again.

Virginia. (*Aside to ZABI.*) We will buy them if possible; remember, we have promised.

Dorval. The Governor leaves the island this very night. He is going to France on the business of his office, but only for a short time; we need his presence too much to allow him to remain long away. I must go to him. Adieu, Paul and Virginia, your praises are on every one's lips and you well deserve it. (*Exit.*)

Paul. Farewell, Zabi and remember Virginia.

Virginia. And Paul.

Zabi. Always, always! Farewell.

(*Exit with the rest of the NEGROES.*)

Virginia. How glad I am that I was so fortunate with the gentleman. (*With simplicity.*)

Paul. (*Fondly.*) Your eyes did it. How he gazed at you.

Virginia. (*Anxiously.*) We must go home. But I am so weary, how shall I walk. (*Sinks on the bank.*)

Paul. We must have something to eat first.

Virginia. So we ought, I had forgotten I was so hungry. (*Laughingly.*) I am nearly starved—have you anything with you?

Paul. The basket!

Virginia. Don't you remember, we gave all that was in it to that poor negro.

Paul. I had forgotten. Then I must look for some fruit.

Virginia. (Timidly.) Oh, pray do not try to climb the high trees.

Paul. There is a branch; if I bring you some fruit will you give me a kiss?

Virginia. Give me the fruit first. (*PAUL throws her some, she catches it, and throws him back a kiss with her fingers.*)

Paul. No, no. The wind carried it away, I will have my recompense! (*Brings forward fruit and as she approaches to take it, he drops the fruit suddenly and embraces her, she strives to escape.*) No! no! I will not let you go! Pardon me, but if you always refuse I must get one by stratagem. Do not be angry, come let us be friends again and we will go home.

Virginia. But how! The rain has raised the water, I dare not cross the stream. We must go around, and I am so weary.

Paul. I will carry you—but what road shall we take. (*Disconcerted.*)

Virginia. Indeed we are lost. (*Weeps.*) Our poor mothers, what will they think! You would come so far!

Paul. Do not blame me! Hush! Listen!

Virginia. (Joyfully.) It is Fidele! (*Clapping her hands.*) It is our own dog! Is it possible, we are so near home, can we be only behind our own mountain?

Paul. (Rapturously.) Sister, sister, there is Domingo! (*DOMINGO appears on the other side of the stream.*)

Domingo. Oh, my dear master! My mistress too! (*Begins to cross by leaping from rock to rock.*)

Virginia. (In fright.) Oh Paul, he will perish—the water is so rapid!

Paul. Do not be afraid. He can swim, there is no danger. (*Goes to the bank and helps DOMINGO up.*) My good Domingo!

Domingo. How happy I am to find you. Your mothers have been so anxious. They came home and you were not there. I searched everywhere—I grew frightened—I thought you were lost in the forest. At last a happy thought struck me, I showed your clothing to Fidele, instantly the dog seemed to understand. She soon came upon your trail, and followed it into the woods; there I met a party of blacks, who told me they left you here—

Paul. And now we must return.

Domingo. But how! We will have to go round, the streams have risen so much.

Virginia. Alas, and I am almost worn out.

Paul. But we must go. Our mothers are anxious although we have not been absent half a day.

Domingo. That is true, but remember that to a mother's heart the hours of absence are long. But my young mistress, how will she climb the rocks—once I could carry her all day in my arms, but now she is a woman, and poor Domingo is old—

Paul. (*Ardently.*) But I am young and strong. I could carry a much heavier burden than my little sister.

Domingo. But the stream!

Paul. Look at the rocks—how close they stand. I am sure we can cross by them. You did it, and I will be so careful. Come, Domingo! Come, Virginia! We must hasten to relieve our mothers' anxiety.

Domingo. (*Aside.*) What a good youth? But my own, my darling Zizi would not I have done as much for you!

Virginia. (*Shrinking back.*) But I am afraid.

Domingo. You need not be. We will carry you by turns. Do not fear—when a man carries what he loves his strength cannot fail!

Virginia. As you will—I will try to summon my courage—But if your foot should slip. (*Shudders.*)

Domingo. Fie! For shame! I did not think you would distrust us!

Virginia. (*In sudden alarm.*) Oh Paul, some one is coming! There—several—look!

Domingo. Ha! Those are the good friends, who told me where to find you. Hurrah! Friends—neighbors—how came you here!

(*The NEGROES appear on the other side of the stream.*)

A Negro. Young man, do not try to cross! You may fall, be lost—she may be drowned. Wait, we are stronger—let us carry the gentle white girl, let us help her.

(*The NEGROES cross—some by the rocks—others plunging into the water.*)

Paul. Do not fear! These are kind blacks, Virginia. They are anxious to help you and have come to seek you.

Negro. Yes, yes, we heard the kind lady begging our master to spare Zabi. We saw her weep in pity for the poor black man. We heard her—we saw her—we loved her—we are grateful. We would be hard hearted—wicked indeed, if we were not grateful to you, sweet lady.

Another Negro. Trust us, kind mistress, we will carry you carefully. Your brother is weary, our very hearts are at your feet—trust us, trust your grateful blacks.

Negro. We can make a litter for the lady out of branches, where she can lie in rest and safety. With such a burden, how carefully, how smoothly we will go. Dear lady, let us show our gratitude—do not despise the thanks, the service of a poor black man.

TABLEAU.

ACT II.

SCENE—*Garden of MADAME DE LA TOUR's dwelling.
Two palm trees, of nearly the same height, at the
entrance.*

Madame de la Tour. They do not return. What can have befallen them?

Marguerite. Calm yourself, my friend. Domingo will certainly find them.

Madame. Marguerite, my friend, my companion, how my heart beats with anxiety when I am separated from my Virginia—my only one, my darling.

Marguerite. Perhaps Paul has taken her to some neighboring cabin. Take courage, she is loved by every one throughout the island—no one would harm her.

Madame. But they do not return. So long absent! oh, I tremble with fear!

Marguerite. Rely on the fidelity of Domingo. In all these years how faithful, kind and devoted he has been. What a friend has the poor black been to us in our sorest need!

Madame. You are indeed right. What has not Domingo been to us and to our children?

Marguerite. My dear friend, while our children are with us, you strive to veil your sorrow; but now, when we are alone, speak to me—speak to me freely—rest on my tried friendship. What weighs so heavily upon your heart?

Madame. You have long known what motives caused me to leave France. My heart had chosen for itself—my family bitterly, cruelly opposed my marriage. I

departed with my husband—I could not do otherwise. He brought me to this island—we were alone—friendless; our only wealth his courage and his hopes. Then—I lost him. Then indeed were we alone—I and my little Virginia—how alone until I found you, my dear, dear friend. You too were unhappy, and our widowed hearts clung together.

Marguerite. And I—what a different fate was mine! Deceived by the most perfidious of men, who left me—abandoned me with my unhappy son. Repulsed by my own kindred, I sought peace and safety in these wilds, and here—but speak not of my griefs—I bless them—for to them I owe your friendship.

Madame. Uniting our little fortunes, we bought this cabin, and here we have lived, unmolested—tended, served, cared for by our faithful Domingo—by our friend, Domingo.

Marguerite. Our friend, indeed, through long years of solitude. But now—my friend.

Madame. Yes, yes, I will tell you all. I have an aunt still living in France. In my utter desolation, my hopes turned towards her. I wrote to her, and, besides, begged the Governor to visit her and plead my cause. How impatiently I awaited his return! He came back at last, but he could only tell me that she was still angry—that she considered my sufferings only the just punishment of my conduct. This, then, was the fruit of eleven years of hope!

Marguerite. What need have you of relatives? Have we not been happy together in the past? and, in the future, do we not hope that the childish affection of our children will ripen into a feeling—a stronger feeling, which will bind them forever to each other and to us?

Madame. They are too young, too poor. Paul must not be kept here, in this solitude, he should go among men. Let us send him out in quest of knowledge, ex-

perience, fortune—let us send him to India. Then, when Virginia returns—

Marguerite. When Virginia returns! What mean you?

Madame. Ah, you do not yet know what has caused me so many tears. Your tenderness has shown that you saw my distress, although you have been too kind to press me to reveal it. That letter from France—

Marguerite. (*Anxiously.*) Yes, the letter!

Madame. I have been unjust to our good Governor. I thought him hard and without feeling; but when he went a second time to France, he again, without my knowledge, sought my aunt, represented my condition, and plead my cause so well that her heart was moved, and she asks in this letter that I will allow her to take charge of Virginia. The Governor is compelled by business to return immediately to France;—he will conduct her. But how can I spare her from my sight?

Marguerite. Separate yourself from her!

Madame. Hush! Listen!

Marguerite. It is Paul. It is our children.

(*Enter PAUL, VIRGINIA and NEGROES.*)

Paul. Mother, Madame, we are safe.

Madame. Wretched children, where have you been? What torture you have caused us.

Virginia. (*Artlessly.*) We have been away beyond the river and these kind negroes carried me home.

First Negro. (*To MADAME DE LA TOUR.*) Ah! lady, you do not know what your daughter has done. She is an angel of goodness!

Second Negro. (*Eagerly.*) Yes, Madame, she begged mercy for a poor runaway slave. She is so good, so kind, that she wept because the poor negro was to be torn from his little ones.

First Negro. Your children gave their dinners to the starving black man.

Second Negro. Yes, Madame, and we saw her kneel to his master to beg him to forgive him. Ah! she is very kind! Her tears softened the master's heart, although he was very angry.

First Negro. The young man was so brave, he would not let the poor runaway be punished.

Second Negro. Bless their kind hearts. Ah! ladies, you should be happy in such children.

Marguerite. (*With emotion.*) We are, we are indeed.

Madame. (*Embracing VIRGINIA.*) My darling, you make me a proud mother.

Marguerite. But, Paul, did you escape the storm?

Paul. What a tempest it was! It makes me fear for the ships that are on our coast, and for those, too, that are to sail to-morrow.

(*MADAME starts as with pain, and MARGUERITE places her hand on his mouth as if playfully embracing him.*)

Virginia. (*Gaily.*) Why do they go then? Why not stay on the island in happiness as we do? My Mother, what disturbs you—why do you weep?

Domingo. (*To MADAME.*) Mistress, our good friends are weary and hungry.

Madame. Thank you, Domingo, for reminding me—my thoughts were bent on other things. Take them in and give them whatever we have.

Domingo. Come my friends, follow me into the cabin.

(*Exeunt DOMINGO and other NEGROES.*)

Madame. Alas my children!

Virginia. Dear Mother, what troubles you?

Madame. (*Vehemently.*) You must never, never leave me!

Virginia. How could I—it would break my heart.

Paul. The thought alone brings bitter tears.

(*Goes into the cabin and returns immediately.*)

Virginia. May I always live beneath this roof, I ask no brighter fate! Always with you.

Madame. (*Aside.*) It will tear my heart to tell her.

Virginia. Yes, alone, with you, with Marguerite (*PAUL returns*) and with Paul—Have I not everything to make me happy.

Paul. (*To MARGUERITE.*) What distresses you?

Virginia. (*To MADAME.*) And you, my mother, why do you weep?

Paul. Virginia, sister, they have been so anxious, we must never wander so far again.

(*Re-enter DOMINGO with the other NEGROES.*)

Domingo. Good heavens! what harm the storm has done, I can see many fallen trees from the window.

Paul. Virginia's grove—I hope—

Madame. My children, I have never seen your enclosure.

Paul. Come, let us all go and see if the tempest has injured the trees. Fortunately it has spared our friendly neighbors. (*Pointing to the trees of the garden.*) Come, Madame, Mother, Virginia—Domingo take good care of our kind friends, and do not forget what I gave you.

Madame. (*Aside to MARGUERITE.*) During our walk will you not break the intelligence to your son? explain to Paul that it is only the good of Virginia that could induce me. (*Suppressing her emotion.*)

Paul. Adieu, kind blacks.

Virginia. Many thanks and good bye. (*Exeunt MADAME, MARGUERITE, VIRGINIA and PAUL.*)

Domingo. Here my friends, here are some pretty little rings that Paul bade me give you with his thanks. (*Distributing them.*) Every one of you I am sure has a sweetheart who will wear it. (*To the oldest NEGRO, giving a mirror.*) My young mistress wishes you to carry this as a present to your wife.

Old Negro. (*Looking at himself with delight.*) Myself again! There is another inside. Look, look, there I am looking at myself, and now there is you too. (*To the NEGRO standing next.*)

Domingo. (*Much amused.*) Yes, yes, you can all see yourselves in it as you do where the brook runs smoothly over the deep rocks.

Old Negro. (*Enchanted.*) Thank Virginia, for me. Give her many thanks, Domingo.

Domingo. Silence, hush. I see the Governor coming!

(*Enter M. DE LA BOURDONNAIS followed by two NEGROES carrying a small chest. DOMINGO and the rest of the NEGROES bow humbly, some kissing his garments.*)

La Bourdonnais. (*Graciously.*) Good day, my friends, good day. Does not Madame de la Tour live here?

Domingo. (*Bowing.*) Yes, master.

La Bourdonnais. (*Good-naturedly.*) My fine fellow, I want to speak with her.

Domingo. You will be most welcome to us all if you have any good news for her. She has been more sad than usual to day. (*Exit followed by NEGROES.*)

La Bourdonnais. (*To his servants.*) You may put down the chest in the garden, and withdraw. Wait at a little distance, but be ready to accompany me when I go.

(*Enter MADAME—exeunt two NEGROES.*)

La Bourdonnais. I must entreat your pardon, Madame, for not visiting you earlier. But public business has prevented me—you have, I hope, received the letter which your aunt gave me to deliver to you. You are aware how anxious she is to see your daughter.

Madame. Ah, sir! These tears are the assurance that I have received it. My own health, the prejudice that Madame de Saint Far still seems to feel against me, a dear friend that I have found in these wilds and whom I cannot abandon to the horrors of solitude—are reasons so strong as to prevent my return to my native land.

La Bourdonnais. But the interests of Virginia, her happiness, her future, demand the voyage. It would be injustice for you to deprive her of the brilliant prospects offered by your aunt—she proposes to make Virginia her heir. Submit willingly for your child's good, and all resort to authority will be unnecessary.

Madame. Authority, what authority? Is there, can there be any in such a case against the right of a mother?

La Bourdonnais. The Bureau has in this case invested me with the right to use all my power, but I am only anxious for the well being of the colonists, so I trust that you will freely, and without constraint, sacrifice a few years to your daughter's future welfare.

Madame. In France I might perhaps regain and enjoy the wealth that I am certainly entitled to—but happiness and peace are more precious than rank and riches. A devoted friend, a child more worthy than I even dared to hope, young Paul—

La Bourdonnais. I have observed the excellent conduct of the young man. I am aware of the services he has rendered you, the kind offices that he still continues to perform. I will do whatever is in my power to assist him. I am about despatching some vessels to India, and I can offer him an advantageous position.

Madame. Paul indeed deserves an opportunity to distinguish himself.

La Bourdonnais. As to Virginia, if you shrink from undertaking the voyage, confide her to me. My character, I hope, merits your confidence. She shall be the object of my care and respect, and I promise you that I will consider her as my daughter.

Madame. Your kind offer and her advancement recommend themselves more strongly to my reason than to my heart. I know that self-sacrifice is a parent's duty—but alas, I am weak of resolution (*much moved*) and there—there she comes. Oh Virginia, my darling, my only stay!

La Bourdonnais. I will leave you alone with her—your sense of duty will triumph over other considerations. This chest I was charged to deliver to her, but let me leave the task to you; the hand of the giver will add charms to the gift. The vessel may perhaps weigh anchor to night. I trust your daughter will accompany me. [*Exit.*]

Madame. (*Alone.*) Poor Virginia. But I must arm myself with courage—her happiness, her future, a future most happy—all, all compel me to the sacrifice.

(*Enter VIRGINIA and the PRIEST.*)

Virginia. Mamma, mamma, the grove has not been injured, a few shrubs have been torn up, but Paul is replanting them. My dear mother, still grieving—but here is our good Priest, he will console you—and I (*fondling her*) I will never leave you so long again.

Madame. (*Aside.*) She will never leave me, poor child, she knows not what she promises (*Aloud.*) Welcome, most welcome, father. (*Aside.*) He comes indeed at the moment of need.

Priest. The recent storms have been so violent, that I was fearful for your safety. But by Heaven's blessing you have escaped. (*Crosses himself.* MADAME and VIRGINIA follow his example.)

Virginia. Father Pierre, you must need rest. (*Leads him to a seat under a tree.*)

Priest. I am weary, my daughter.

Virginia. Pray be seated. (*Seeing the chest.*) Ah, mother what can this be!

Madame. It is for you. It is all yours.

Virginia. Mine!

Madame. Yes, it is a present from Madame de Saint Far.

Virginia. The aunt you have spoken of sometimes. She is no longer offended, she must love you again.

Madame. Yes she is even very desirous of seeing you. (*Breaking off, trying to hide her emotion.*) But—but—look—what does the chest contain.

Virginia. (*Kneeling at the chest.*) Oh! The beautiful dresses, charming! (*Suddenly.*) Money! Mother, mother, you shall now want for nothing. (*Hurrying towards her with the purse, then suddenly darting towards the PRIEST.*) Take these, Father (*gives money*) for the poor of our island. See, see, how rich I am, hold, take some more, and if there is not enough send them to us.

Priest. (*Aside.*) Good heart; Generous soul!

Madame. (*Affecting gaiety.*) You ought to love this lady, she wishes to make you happy.

Virginia. Thanks to her, I am, for now I can give you much that you have long needed.

Madame. (*Timidly.*) Then you do not want to see her.

Virginia. (*Playfully.*) Indeed I do. I am dying with anxiety to go to her this moment.

Madame. (*Resolutely controlling herself.*) Ah! Father Pierre, will you read this letter to her. (*Aside.*) I cannot summon the courage. (*Gives the letter to VIRGINIA.*)

Virginia. (*Aside.*) The very letter I was telling Paul about. (*To her mother.*) You must chose whatever you like best out of the chest, that I may have the pleasure of making you a gift. (*Gives the letter to the PRIEST.*)

Madame. (*Aside.*) Now she will learn all.

Priest. (*Reading.*) "Madame—The manner in which M. de la Bourdonnais has spoken to me of your—

self and your misfortunes, the tender interest inspired by his description of your daughter have conspired to touch my heart, so long, I fear, unjustly armed against you. It now alone remains for me to endeavor to repair the wrongs inflicted on you by our family."

Virginia. (*Running to MADAME.*) Repair your wrongs—did you hear that! Alas, you weep, you were not listening.

Madame. Oh heaven!

Priest. (*Continuing.*) "I am anxious to see your Virginia. My heart, my lonely heart calls her—give her to me, and I will settle upon her my entire fortune. M. de la Bourdonnais must return to France immediately. Confide this precious treasure to his care."

Virginia. (*Passionately, snatching at the letter.*) Leave you—this island—go to France! Oh, my mother!

Madame. Yes, my darling!

Virginia. You had not read it before—

Madame. Me, what mean you?

Virginia. Did you know what she proposed—this this—relation. Oh! no, no! you surely did not, you could not. (*With great emotion.*) Leave thee, my mother, my country! What do I care for her wealth, her promises, without thee—without thee. (*Throws herself into her mother's arms.*)

Madame. You now feel what it will cost me. But—but—with Margaret, with Paul, I will not be altogether unhappy. Think of the future—if you should lose me, what would become of you. Poverty, labor, I cannot bear the thought.

Virginia. Our Creator has condemned us to labor, you have taught me to bless it and the giver every day. Will He abandon us now, He who has preserved us so long. (*With animation.*) No, see, He has not, He will not—this money, is it not enough for our whole lives?

Madame. Think of it not as a separation, it is only a voyage.

Virginia. Ah my mother, it is a separation.

Madame. Consider the motives for the effort. Your interests, mine, Paul's, his mother's—for your fortune, will it not be ours? My darling, how many men expiate themselves for a hope of future wealth, with you it will be certainty.

Virginia. They surely have no mothers.

Madame. Ask our good friend, ask Father Pierre. (*To the PRIEST.*) Father you have read the letter. You see what my aunt offers, should Virginia hesitate!

Priest. No, not one moment.

Virginia. You, you, who preach the duty of children to their parents—

Priest. Am I not right! Your mother is poor—for years her courage has elevated her above her misfortunes, but now, and in the future, it becomes your duty—

Virginia. (*Interrupting him.*) But see this gold,—it is not mine,—it is hers. See, is there not enough?

Priest. There is a large sum, but not sufficient for such a purpose—and the poor of the island what did you promise for them! Balance the pain of departure with the rapture of return, my daughter. Your mother relieved from all fear of the future—the benefits that you will have the power to bestow.

Virginia. (*Sobbing bitterly.*) Yes, yes, I will go. You know well how to secure my consent. But Paul, my brother, must I part from him?

Priest. Who would take care of your mother and his?

Virginia. You are right—but you must tell him! Say that his happiness, the future of all, requires that I should go, else I would rather die. Alas, your wisdom has decided me, but what will console him?

Madame. Father Pierre will accompany me, we will seek him, we will comfort, console him. My daughter, my Virginia, may heaven support thee.

(*Exeunt* PRIEST and MADAME.)

Virginia. (*Alone.*) To quit these places, so dear. To quit thee, Paul! No! no! I must not think of him—of the present. I must follow the advice of the Priest; yes, it is of the future I must think, it will give me courage.

(PAUL enters hastily.)

Paul. Is it true? Do they deceive me, do you go to-morrow, perhaps this very night!

Virginia. (*Terror struck.*) To-night, this night, so soon, I knew not! (*Trying to recover herself.*) I—

Paul. Hide nothing from me, they have told me all.

Virginia. Paul, dear Paul, I must obey, it is my duty.

Paul. To quit your mother—me, and for whom? A relation you have never seen—Oh, Virginia!

Virginia. How gladly would I remain here forever. But they all, the Priest himself—

Paul. Their arguments have decided you to go, but think of the reasons to detain you here.

Virginia. Paul, be merciful—do you think that Virginia's heart does not shrink from this separation. Cruel! Do you not know what tears it has already cost me!

Paul. (*Ardently.*) I have not yet spoken of myself. What will be my fate when you are no longer with me. How can I endure these scenes in which we have been so happy.

Virginia. Spare me!

Paul. These very trees, that have grown with our growth, strengthened with our strength—under which we have played, have rested, have learned to love, which we have named with our names. They should live and die with us, but (*passionately*) yours shall never offer me shade, never recall such bitter memories when you are far away. (*Rushes to the tree as if to tear it up.*)

Virginia. (*Embracing him.*) Paul, Paul, I shall return—we will all grow old together. (*Sobbing and covering her face with her hands.*) Poor, poor Virginia!

Paul. Do not hide your tears from me. They are the only good remaining to me in this world. You will regret me!

Virginia. He asks me that!

Paul. Let me accompany you on board at least. There may be a storm, a tempest. The sky was all on fire this morning and now clouds are gathering in the south.

Virginia. (*Throwing herself in his arms.*) You terrify me.

Paul. Let me reanimate your courage, your heart shall find warmth and strength on mine. My darling, in France, among strangers, I must be by your side—I will serve you. Let us go together, let me be your servant.

Virginia. It is for you that I go—that you shall not always labor. (*With sudden emotion.*) Do you not know that I love you, you alone. How much has it cost me every day to prevent my heart from flying to yours. And now, Paul, when duty calls to separate from my very self, until Heaven bless our union—now, Paul, you upbraid me. (*A cannon sounds.*)

(*Enter MADAME DE LA TOUR, MARGUERITE and PRIEST.*)

Paul. (*Beside himself.*) Do you hear, they are calling you. (*To the women.*) Behold my despair, hers. I will go with her, nothing shall part us.

Marguerite. Would you leave us?

Paul. (*Wildly.*) Hinder me not!

Madame. My son, remain with us, our stay, our only comfort.

Paul. Your son—do you call us your children, and yet you separate us. Send her to Europe, to the country that refused you an asylum in your distress, to cruel relatives who abandoned you! (*Drawing VIRGINIA to him.*) If she goes, I will go too. If the Governor refuses I will throw myself into the sea. I will follow her through the waves. That tempest that is coming will destroy us both!

Virginia. Oh listen to me, listen to thy Virginia.

Priest. Moderate thy grief, my son.

Paul. To lose her I cannot survive, I cannot bear her absence. (*Falls insensible.*)

Virginia. (*Distractedly.*) Paul, Paul hear me. (*Cannon sounds again.*) Can it indeed be, has the fatal moment arrived?

Paul. (*Rousing.*) The cannon again, alas!

Priest. Her return will be so happy, that you will rejoice even for this grief—glad that you bore the loss for the gain.

Paul. Virginia, I will always be as now. Hear my oath—

Marguerite. (*To PRIEST.*) We must separate them!

Virginia. Mother, your happiness is my law.

(*Enter M. DE LA BOURDONNAIS, SAILORS and NEGROES.*)

La Bourdonnais. The wind is rising, all is prepared, we only await Virginia.

Virginia. (*To sailors in a voice smothered with emotion.*) Take me! Take me! now, when I have courage.

Madame. How can I live without you! (*To the Governor.*) You are taking the sunshine of my life.

La Bourdonnais. I will soon return her to your arms.

Paul. They shall not tear thee from me.

(*VIRGINIA detatches herself, and is led off by a SAILOR, while MARGUERITE and the PRIEST detain MADAME DE LA TOUR and PAUL. VIRGINIA on reaching the gate breaks from the SAILOR and flies back to PAUL.*)

Virginia. Paul, Paul! (*Springs into his arms.*)

Paul. You will not, cannot go.

La Bourdonnais. (*Soothingly.*) She will soon return.

(*They are separated again by the SAILORS. VIRGINIA as she goes off puts her handkerchief to her eyes, appears to wet it with her tears and then convulsively throws it towards her mother.*)

Virginia. Farewell, mother, farewell!

(*MADAME rushes to the handkerchief, burries her face in it and falls fainting.*)

TABLEAU.

End of ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*The seashore—on one side at back a high practicable rock. Twilight.*

Paul. (*Walking about wildly.*) She is gone. My Virginia!

Priest. Calm yourself. Cease this wild grief.

Paul. I have lost the light of my life. When will I hear her voice, gaze into her eyes!

Priest. My son, where is your obedience, your faith!

Paul. Gone, gone with her!

Priest. Be calm. You must preserve yourself for her.

Paul. If I had only bidden her farewell, if I had only said, Virginia, if I have ever offended you forgive me—say you do! I could then have bade her go and be happy. You weep, Father, there are tears in your eyes; then I believe it—it is true—Virginia has left us.

Priest. Only for a short time—some months—perhaps.

Paul. Months! And she on the other side of the globe. If I had known what we were to suffer, we would never have left that wild spot where we strayed this morning—only this morning—alas! how long ago.

Priest. Strive to compose yourself.

Paul. There was a spring, a date tree—and—my Virginia. What more could we desire. But, Father, I cannot rest, I too shall strive for fortune—gold—that I may be ready to welcome Virginia as my bride. I will go to India.

Priest. And leave her mother.

Paul. (*Bitterly.*) She separated us.

Priest. Think of your own mother.

Paul. (*Softened.*) She is good, she is true; I cannot desert her.

Priest. While she is away, you can study, you can acquire that knowledge here that Virginia will be gaining in France. Let me teach you.

Paul. Then I can write to her.

Priest. Yes, and read the words of those sages who have lived and struggled before us—books will be new, dear friends to you.

Paul. I needed them not when Virginia was with me.

Priest. Here comes your mother, subdue your sorrow for her sake.

Paul. I have not lost all. (*Enter MARGUERITE.*) Mother, mother, she is gone.

Marguerite. Alas, too true, my son! I have come to seek you—her mother has sunk beneath her despair. Come, see if your presence will revive her.

Paul. (*Coldly.*) See her, never! She has broken my heart, let others dry her tears. Let us go home to the places where Virginia has lived. But, hold! (*With sudden feeling.*) Come you with me, let us leave this island, barren now—come with me to India.

Marguerite. And abandon my poor friend in her despair? Paul, Paul, this is unlike your own kind heart. The night is coming on, the gathering clouds foretell—

Paul. (*With a cry of terror.*) What! A tempest!

Priest. Nay, rather come with me to the rock.

Paul. He is right. The moon must soon rise, then we can see far, far over the waves that are bearing her away. (*Goes to the rock.*)

Priest. (*To MARGUERITE.*) Do not leave him, he is almost mad. Go to him!

Marguerite. But my friend sits alone in tears.

Priest. (Sternly.) Go to your son, he needs you!

(PAUL and MARGUERITE ascend the rock, the
PRIEST stands below.)

Marguerite. Can you see the ship?

Paul. I see nothing.

Priest. Do you discern anything, Paul?

Paul. Night comes on so fast. (*Passionately.*) As if to add to my torment the sky is covered with clouds. (*Lightning.*) The lightnings burst through the heavens, the island lies in heavy silence. All nature sympathizes with my sorrow. With the day fled hope, and darkness and death remain.

Priest. Do not lose all hope. Fires will soon be kindled along the shore—Virginia gazing on them will think of you. (*Thunder.*)

Paul. Do you hear those fearful sounds, see the clouds! Hear me, heaven, (*kneeling*) on my knees I pray, let the bolt not reach her, if there must be a victim may I be the chosen one.

Priest. (*Throws himself on his knees, MARGUERITE follows his example.*) Spare the vessel! let the tempest burst in mid ocean, let the waves feel Thy wrath, in Thy mercy let our loved ones escape. (*Enter NEGROES bearing wood.*) Have you tidings. know you aught of the vessels?

Negro. No, Father Pierre, we have not heard or seen anything, but the Commandant fears a storm, a terrible storm. The sky is black, the sun set in flames, and he has ordered fires to be built all along the shore.

Paul. Oh heavens! Virginia!

Priest. Have faith my son, all may yet be well.

(*Enter DOMINGO.*)

Domingo. (*To PAUL.*) See what Virginia charged me to give into your hands.

Paul. Her ring! Ah, see, mother, she has left me the ring she has worn so long.

Domingo. She begs that you will keep it safely, for her sake, until she returns.

Paul. (*Passionately.*) It shall never leave me!

Domingo. My young mistress had but a moment to speak, but she said: "my good Domingo, tell him to think of Virginia whenever he gazes upon it, and you, Domingo, friend of my childhood, do not forget me, let not Paul forget me." (*Weeps.*) Oh, my dear mistress, when will we see her again.

Priest. Paul, rouse yourself—will you not help in lighting the beacons!

Paul. Gladly, most gladly. (*Goes back.*)

Priest. (*To MARGUERITE.*) Let him work, his brain will grow calmer, his heart quieter.

(*Enter officer of the port and SOLDIERS with torches —SOLDIERS and NEGROES move busily up and down the shore during the scene, PAUL working with them.*)

Officer. (*Rapidly.*) Good evening, Father! (*To NEGROES.*) I am glad you are so promptly at work. The night will be fearful, the wind is rising, and the heat is stifling. There is a vessel near shore. I feel very anxious. While I see that the men are distributed along the shore, will you, Father Pierre, graciously encourage those I leave here. (*Raising his voice.*) Attention! To your duty every man. Watch and wait, and bless God if you are able to save the lives of any poor voyagers this night. (*Exit officer.*)

Marguerite. Oh, God, be merciful!

Priest. Courage, Madame, you see they are preparing to assist—

Marguerite. (*Impetuously.*) Father, I charge you to take care of Paul, his conduct alarms me, and yet I

may not stay—my poor, poor friend, I must not leave her. *(Exit.)*

Priest. (Going back.) Courage, my friends, courage! How blessed is he who saves another from death.

(NEGROES and SOLDIERS arrange empty casks and planks.)

Negro. Poor souls! Alas, for those on the broad seas this night.

A Negro. (Standing on the rock.) I see, I see a vessel. Put on more wood, give them more light. How the ship tosses!

Paul. (Rushing to the rock.) Alas, Virginia!

Priest. (Interrupting him.) My son, my poor boy, be patient.

Paul. How could her mother send her away? I have upbraided her, but now Virginia's tears will also curse her.

Priest. Shame, shame on you. Virginia even in despair would never have so wicked a thought.

Soldier. (From the rock.) It is the Governor's vessel, the mast is broken.

(Cannon sounds, stage is dark except in the flashes of lightning.)

Paul. They call for help. *(Ascends the rock followed by the PRIEST.)* Virginia, let me save her! *(Attempts to plunge into the water, but is prevented by FATHER PIERRE.)*

(Enter MARGUERITE and MADAME DE LA TOUR.)

Priest. Forbear, my son!

Paul. Loosen your grasp, dare not hold me.

Marguerite (Shrieks.) Oh my son, stay, stay!

Paul. (*Struggling.*) Again it sounds. (*Cannon.*)
I must save her!

Marguerite. Forget not me, think of my agony!

Paul. The cannon tells of theirs, it is the cry of those ready to perish. It is Virginia praying me to rescue her! (*Bursts from those holding him and throws himself into the sea.*)

(*In Pantomime MADAME DE LA TOUR falls insensible, MARGUERITE and PRIEST assisting her. OFFICER and SOLDIERS appear in perspective along the shore, NEGROES throwing planks from the rocks. At the back appears a ship torn by the tempest, VIRGINIA seen standing on the deck, holding by one hand and signaling with the other. ZABI on his knees at her feet. Scene brilliantly lighted by flashes of lightning, a bolt strikes the vessel, it breaks, VIRGINIA and ZABI disappear—the stage left in darkness.*)

Negro. Virginia, Paul, they are lost, may the blessings of the poor negro lighten their path.

Marguerite. (*Shricks.*) Nay, nay, do not say that they are dead!

(*Light returns, cries in the distance, then shouts.*)

Negro. (*Looking off.*) They come, they come, they are saved!

NEGROES and SOLDIERS exhibit delight in pantomime. Enter PAUL and ZABI bearing VIRGINIA, unconscious, to the front. PAUL supports her on his knees, while she regains consciousness—she recognizes him, then totters to her mother.

Virginia. Mother it is I, your Virginia, saved, saved by Zabi's efforts.

Paul. (*Rushing to ZABI.*) You, was it you—on the ship with her?

Virginia. He never deserted me, he remained by my side, and when the bolt fell (*shudders and hides her face*)—in that terrible moment—in the water, he found me—raised me—bore me up.

(*Enter M. DE LA BOURDONNAIS.*)

M. de la Bourdonnais. Is she safe, did the black succeed. (*To MADAME.*) Let her stay, you cannot part again. I must go, I will see your aunt, if she will do nothing, you must allow me to charge myself with Virginia's future. (*To ZABI.*) I saw you, my brave fellow, and grateful as well as brave—I saw your devotion—here let me grant you what recompense I can—this purse. (*Gives him purse.*) You are free, remain with your children. (*VIRGINIA and PAUL seize ZABI'S hands in congratulation.*) But their gratitude and friendship is a greater boon to the brave black.

TABLEAU.

FINIS.



